

76

THE
COMPLAINTS
OF THE
MANUFACTURERS,

Relating to the ABUSES in

Marking the SHEEP,

AND

Winding the WOOL,

Fairly stated, and Impartially considered,

Newman's C. M. In a LETTER

To the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM.

Sua si Bona nôrint.

VIRG. Georg. ii.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. Bowyer*;

And Sold by D. BROWNE, without *Temple-Bar*;

J. WHISTON and B. WHITE, in *Fleetstreet*;

W. MEADOWS, in *Cornhill*; J. ROBINSON, in

Ludgate-Street; and G. WOODFALL, at

Charing-Cross.

MDCCLII.

450



46

6559

Some Coffee House

Darwin Court
THE
Oct. 11.
1752
COMPLAINTS
OF THE

Manufacturers, &c.

MY LORD,

AS I wish the Welfare and Honour of my Country perpetual, I examine anxiously the growing Generation; and when I see the Dawn of Merit in a rising Character, I enjoy the Prospect through all the flattering Consequences which Hope presents to my Imagination. It gave me therefore great Pleasure to see your Lordship last Year, upon your first Appearance, at an Age, in a Rank, and with a Fortune too commonly considered only as the Means or Excuse for Rounds of Dissipation and Folly, in Private, pursuing Knowledge with Docility, and Eagerness to learn; in Public, endeavoring to understand, and attending

attending to Business; making yourself *first* Master of the Subject, and *then* taking part in the Debates of that House, of which you are a Member, upon large extensive Notions, and solid Principles.

I took particular Notice how much you interested yourself for the MANUFACTURERS, and how constantly you attended whilst their Complaints against the Growers and Sellers of Wool, were, last Session, under the Consideration of Parliament. You informed yourself of the Nature of the Question; and as soon as you understood it, you took a warm and zealous Part on the Side where you found private Justice, and publick Policy: Had others taken the same Trouble to be informed, the WOOLLEN MANUFACTURERS could not have failed in an Application to ease the most inestimable Branch of our Trade from Fraud and Abuse; and no Land Owner could have imagined his Interest lay on the Side of tolerating the Grievances complained of. Being myself thoroughly convinced of the Evil, and the Necessity of a Remedy, I have thrown together some Thoughts upon the Subject; and I address them to your Lordship, because I rejoice to see you engaged so early in studying and promoting the Commercial Interests of your Country, and because I mean to insinuate to others a strong Argument from your Example.

An

An impartial Consideration of the Case will, I flatter myself, remove the Prejudice and Heats which last Session disappointed the Expectation of the Manufacturers; and those Gentlemen, who from, I conceive, a mistaken Apprehension, so warmly opposed the Propositions then made in their Favour, will be convinced of the Justice and Reasonableness of them, when fairly stated, and weighed with Coolness and Candour.

Before I enter into that Consideration, it may not be improper to lay down some fundamental Maxims relating to Trade and Manufactures, which may tend to set the Question in a clear Light, and to shew that the Grievances and Frauds complained of by the Manufacturers in the Sale of Wool, are not so much their own, as a National Cause and Concern.

I believe No-body of common Sense, who has the least Regard for the Interest and Welfare of this Nation, will deny that our Foreign Trade, and particularly the great Exportation of Variety of Goods, fabricated in this Country, is the Source of its Riches and Strength; and that the Vent of our Woollen Manufactures abroad is one of the most considerable Branches of that Trade.

From

From this general and undeniable Maxim, the following Propositions will naturally follow :

1. That the great Demand and Vent for our Manufactures abroad must depend upon the Cheapness and Goodness of them.

2. That the cheaper the Material is, the cheaper the Manufacture may be made ; and the Encouragement to make it Good, will be the greater.

3. That the Excess of the Value of the complete Manufacture, compared with the Value of the Materials of which it is made, is generally very great, in some Cases *immensely* great ; that is, a certain Quantity of Goods worked up and finished, may exceed in Price the same Quantity of the Materials of which it is made, to a vast degree, which, when sold abroad, is so much gained to the Nation *.

* Twelve Pounds of Wool, which cost the Manufacturer Nine-Pence *per* Pound rough, in the *Norwich* Manufactory, are, by Labour only, made worth Forty-two Shillings, in a Species of Stuffs called Sattins, of which there is a Variety of Qualities ; and in one of their best Sorts, the above Quantity is made worth Fifty-two Shillings, which is near Six Times the original Cost. In some other Articles of Manufacture in that City, the Disproportion is much greater.

4. That

4. That so much of the Material as is lost or damaged, so much less Manufacture must be made, or what is made must be of less Value; and consequently the Loss to the Nation must be in Proportion, if the Vent, by that means, is not so great as the Demand from abroad.

5. If the Manufacturer is deceived in giving the same Price for a bad Material as for that which is good, and has no Allowance for it, he must indemnify himself either by making a worse Manufacture, or by demanding a greater Price for that which is well made; and consequently he risques the Vent of his Goods abroad by not making them so good, or not selling them so cheap as his Neighbours may afford to do.

6. If by not being able to support the Credit of his Goods abroad as he formerly did, or in Proportion to what other Nations can do with respect to Cheapness and Goodness, his Exportation of them should decrease, the Demand for the Materials will decrease too, and consequently the Growers and Sellers of those Materials will be Losers in Proportion: So that, if our Trade should be reduced to this unfortunate Situation, the Seller, and the Manufacturer of the Materials will both suffer; but the NATION, by the Decay of our Commerce, will be the greatest Sufferer.

B

Having

Having laid down these Self-evident Propositions, and the Consequences of them, the Application of them to the Complaints of the Woollen Manufacturers will, I don't doubt, appear very evident to your Lordship, by perusing the following State of the Case, and the Reflections upon it.

The Manufacturers of Wool complain, that for seven Years last past, since the Price of Wool has increased, the Growers have increas'd the Mark of *Pitch* and *Tar*, by laying on the Sheep a greater Quantity than is necessary to distinguish the Property, and in some Places by repeating it several Times in a Year, for no other Reason than in order to make the Fleece heavier for Sale; inso-much that the *Tar* Mark, which formerly, when clip'd off, weighed, in some Sorts of Wool, no more than from six to eight Pounds in a Pack of Two hundred and Forty Pounds, has of late weigh'd from twelve to 16 Pounds; and in other Sorts, the Weight of the *Tar*-Mark is from six to twelve Pounds, which was formerly no more than from four to eight Pounds in a Pack containing the same Quantity.

This *Tar-Mark* is wound up in the Fleece, and sold and paid for at the same Price with the rest of the Wool.

It

It is afterwards cut off by the Manufacturer ; and whatever it weighs, half of it is computed to be Tar, and half Wool.

That which is *Tar* is absolutely good for nothing ; the Wool incorporated with the Tar is likewise so much Waste, as the Expence and Trouble of discharging the Tar from the Wool exceed the real Value, or worth of it ; and the Wool which remains where the Tar-Mark has been clipt off, altho' good Wool, occasions a great Loss and Prejudice to the Manufacturer, because the Tar-Mark cannot be cut off without shortening the Staple, which, being shorten'd, is rendered only fit for making Stuffs of an inferior Sort ; whereas, had it remained in its natural Length, it might have been work'd up into a fine Manufacture of great Value ; and the Difference arising from this Grievance only, that is, of the Price of the Goods made of the *short* or of the *long* Staple, where the best Wool is used, may be reckoned at no less than 20 *per Cent.* which the Manufacturer loses.

But this Waste of Wool, and Prejudice to the Manufactory, does not, in truth, so much affect the Maker, as it does the TRADE of the NATION ; for as he cannot make his Goods without some Profit, if he buys Pitch and Tar for Wool, and is obliged to make a

less valuable Commodity by the Shortness of the Staple, which he paid as much for as if it was of its natural Length, he must and will consider these Losses in the Price of his Goods, and must consequently sell them dearer, and by enhancing the Value will endanger the Vent of them abroad: For they who are acquainted with the present State of Foreign Markets, altho' the Growers of Wool carry their Thoughts no farther than to their immediate Gain, are but too sensible of the constant Complaints of the Dearness of the *English* Manufactures, and that the Merchants can be supplied by *France*, &c. with Goods of the same Sorts at a more reasonable Rate.

But this abusive Method of marking the Sheep with Pitch and Tar, is attended with another most grievous Injury to our Manufactory: The Tar-Mark, which might have been cut off entirely at once upon the Sheep's Back before Sheering, being wound up in the Fleece, is by the Force of winding, and being moved from Place to Place, separated into innumerable Parts; and besides, it being infinitely more Trouble as well as Expence to cut it off after the Fleece is wound up than upon the Sheep's Back, it is impossible, in some Cases, with the greatest Care and Circumspection, to clear, so entirely, the Wool of all the Particles of Pitch and Tar,
but

but that some of them will escape the strictest Search, and remain undiscovered in a Piece of Cloth, Shaloon, &c. even after it has gone through the various Stages of Manufactory; and then frequently some Spots occasioned by the Tar-Mark will appear drawn out by the Heat of the Fire in dressing the Goods; which is not only very injurious to the Manufacturer, but is productive of a much greater Evil to the PUBLIC; for as these Defects often escape the nicest Inspection, and are not found out until the Goods are sent and cut up abroad, they are on that Account frequently returned; which, besides the Loss to the Manufacturer, brings a Disreputation upon them, and may be attended with a very fatal Consequence: A few Instances of this Kind are sufficient to stop the Demand and Vent of great Quantities of our Woollen Goods abroad.

There is another Consideration of a Public Nature, which, I believe, does not occur to the Farmer, who looks no further than to the Sale of his Wool; and that is, the great Loss which may reasonably be supposed to accrue to the NATION from the *Waste* of Wool occasioned by this pernicious Method of marking the Sheep with Pitch and Tar: Now this Loss is not to be estimated from the Worth of the Quantity of Wool wasted, which the Farmer may look upon as a Trifle, but from the Difference of the Price between the Manufacture

facture and the Material* ; that is, for Example, by computing how much a Pound of Manufacture exceeds in Value a Pound of raw Wool of which it is made, which Excess in all Sorts of Woollen Goods, on Account of the Skill and Labour in making them, will be found *great*, and in some of the finest to be *immense*, and which by not being exported and sold abroad is so much Loss to the NATION. But I am afraid we have no true Rule to go by in order to make a precise Calculation of this Loss, as it is not possible to ascertain the Quantity of Wool upon which these Frauds are committed: For it must be allowed they are not practised universally in all Counties that grow Wool; and some particular Persons, and indeed some Counties are careful in selling their Wool as clean and as perfect as they can, well knowing, that *Honesty is the best Policy*; but these Persons and Counties must be very few in proportion to those where these Abuses are committed, if we consider the great Number of Counties where the most extensive and valuable Manufactures of Wool for foreign Markets are made, that have complained against the Notoriety of these Abuses, that daily encrease to the great Detriment of Trade: And, therefore, although no exact Calculation can be form'd of the Annual Loss to this Country from these Frauds, yet it must be vastly great, too great, certainly, to

* Vid. Note, p. 6.

be suffered to continue, and should be a sufficient Inducement to Gentlemen, who have the Interest of this *Nation* at Heart, to concur in some Scheme that may effectually remove a Mischief so prejudicial to our foreign Commerce, and obviate the ill Consequences that must unavoidably follow from it, if not timely prevented.

The Notoriety of the Mischief is evident, but what is the proper Scheme or Remedy to prevent it? The Pitch and Tar-Mark must be clipped off; but then it is to be considered when, and by whom, this is to be done.

Now it is well known that the Mark upon the Sheep's Back is confined and united, so that it can with great Ease be selected from any other Part of the Fleece; and as all Wool will on the Back of the Sheep extend to its utmost Length, the Servant who sheers the Sheep can without Difficulty take off the Tar-Mark, and that only; and consequently can have no occasion to shorten any Part of the Staple, except what has the Pitch and Tar upon it: But when the Fleece is shorn, the Mark, by the Method of winding the Wool, becomes greatly divided; and as it does not remain in the same collected State, and the Staple of the Wool will not extend in the same Manner, the cleansing of the Fleece from the Pitch and Tar in this Situation must certainly

tainly be attended with a far greater Loss of Wool than when it is upon the Sheep's Back ; and the Pitch and Tar dispersed in the several Parts of the Fleece will often, as has been said before, escape the strictest Search of the Person employed to clip it off : From hence the many ill Effects, already mentioned, are brought upon our Manufactures, and affect in consequence our FOREIGN Trade.

From what has been said it plainly appears, that the *Pitch* and *Tar-Mark* should be clipt off from the Sheep's Back before it is shorn ; and by the Nature and Situation of it, it follows as clearly that it should be done by the *Farmer* or *Grower* of the Wool, as an Operation that can be perfectly well performed by him with so much Ease and Dispatch that it cannot possibly be any great Charge to him ; and the little he may be at will be made up to him by the Price in the Sale of his Wool, which the Manufacturers will readily allow, and have offered to do it when they can depend upon its being thoroughly clean and neat : And consequently it can be no Discouragement to the Growth of Wool, as has been erroneously pretended by some, when it can be no Hardship or Loss to the Grower to clip off the *Tar-Mark* upon the Sheeps Back.

On the other Hand it cannot be performed by the *Manufacturer* without extraordinary Trouble and Expence; as is evident from the Nature of the Thing, considering the Time and Pains he must employ in doing it. This, together with the Difficulty, and sometimes Impossibility of getting the Tar-Mark entirely out, prevents his being able to make and sell his Goods so perfect and cheap, as he might have done if he had bought his Wool clean and free from it; which may check the Demand and Vent of them, and consequently lessen the Demand and Price of Wool.

Besides, if the *Grower* is obliged to cut off the Tar-Mark before the sheering of the Sheep, he will take Care that the Brand shall be made no broader or thicker with Tar, than shall be absolutely necessary to distinguish the Property; and that it shall be made in such Parts as may do the least Damage to the Wool; or he may think of some other Composition for the Mark instead of Pitch and Tar, that may answer the same Purpose, and yet be easily washed out; as is already the Practice in some Places: Now the *Manufacturer* has it not in his Power to do any of these Things, however reasonable or advantageous they may be to both Parties; and consequently it must be the Business of the *Grower* of the Wool only.

C

It

It is therefore evident that in this Case the Interests of the Growers and Manufacturers of Wool are reciprocal, and that by a strict Connexion and mutual Assistance to each other, they promote and support the *Interest* of the *Nation*: This makes it very surprizing that Country Gentlemen and Farmers should oppose a Remedy proposed to prevent an Abuse so pernicious to our Woollen Manufactory, so detrimental to the NATIONAL TRADE, and so injurious in its Consequence to themselves; this Opposition cannot hold when the Matter is coolly and impartially considered.

I cannot forbear observing on this Occasion, that the *Irish* are so sensible of the Advantage it is to the Sale of their Wool to have it clean, that (altho' the Distinction of Property in the vast open Tracts of that Country where their Sheep are bred, is as necessary as it can be in this) they take care to mark their Sheep either with some Composition that can be easily washed out; or if they make use of Pitch and Tar, the Mark is so small that it causes but little Damage or Loss to the Wool: And as there is no Reason to apprehend any Fraud in their marking and winding, in order to increase the Weight, the *English* Manufacturer readily buys the Wool as it is wound up in the Fleece without any further Enquiry or Complaint; and the *Irish* Grower certainly finds

finds his Account in selling his Wool fairly without Blemish or Blame. This is a Consideration which requires the serious Attention of the *English* Growers of Wool for several Reasons that are obvious.

But it has been said, that as the marking of the Sheep with Pitch and Tar has been ever a constant and known Practice, there is no doubt but that Loss is considered and allowed by the Buyer and Seller, in the Bargain for the Purchase of the Wool.

This might have been, and very likely was the Case, while the Grower confined the Pitch and Tar-Mark to a narrow Spot and Compass, making it no thicker or bigger than was necessary to ascertain the Property; so that the Manufacturer could easily guess, or be in a Manner at a Certainty as to the Loss of Wool occasioned by the Mark, and as to the Allowance fit to be made on that Account: But this injurious Practice has of late Years greatly increased; and it is well known that too many Farmers repeat branding their Sheep two or three Times in a Season, only to increase the Weight of the Fleece to the Buyer. That this is their Motive, is very evident, because a small and single Mark was formerly sufficient to distinguish their Property, whereas a great Part of the Fleece is now frequently loaded with

Pitch and Tar ; which makes it impossible for the Manufacturer who buys the Wool wound up in a Fleece, to see and judge of the Quantity of Pitch and Tar contained and dispersed in it, or the Damage done by it to the Wool : And consequently, as he is obliged to buy when the Trade is brisk, he pays, by the Increase of Weight, for that which is not Wool ; so that it seems absolutely necessary to put an End to these Abuses which produce so many bad Consequences. Upon what the Gentlemen in Opposition founded their Dislike to the Regulation proposed is hard to conceive, it being plain the Farmers cannot suffer by it ; for if an Allowance was made in the Price, on Account of the Tar-Mark, should that be cut off before the Sale, the Wool would certainly bear a better Price ; and it is well known, even at this Time, that some Wool-Growers, convinced of the Prejudice arising from the Practice of marking their Sheep with Pitch and Tar, have made use of other Compositions for the Distinction of Property, and have found their Advantage by commanding a superior Price for their Wool.

It has likewise been said, that the clipping off the Tar-Mark from the Sheep's Back will also shorten the Staple ; and that consequently the Difference with respect to the Value of the Manufacture, by the Shortness of the Staple, will be the same as when it is clipped off
after

after the Fleece is shorn, and has been wound up. Now it has been shown that no Part of the Staple will be affected in the first Case, except what has the original Tar-Mark upon it in one united Spot, which lies then in a narrow Compass; but after the Fleece is wound up, it spreads and becomes so extensive, that it taints a great Quantity of the Wool never intended to be mark'd: Besides, the Manufacturer doth not, when the Mark is cut off from the Sheep's back, pay for the damaged Staple as it is not weigh'd in with the Fleece.

The Manufacturers complain of another Abuse that is practised in *Winding* the Wool, by concealing in the Fleeces made up for Sale, Wool of a Quality inferior to what appears on the outside, and also broken Pieces of damaged Wool, which, with Rubbish of various Kinds, adds to the Weight of them, to the great Deception and Detriment of the Buyer, who pays for the *whole* Parcel as if it was *all* Good Wool: And what makes the Grievance still greater, he sometimes gives an advanced Price on account of the increased Weight, imagining the Wool, for that Reason, to be of a longer and a better Staple; and it would be worth it, if there was nothing more to make up the Weight than the intire Fleeces only; for where a less Number of Fleeces go
to

to a Tod, the Wool is counted more valuable *.

This fraudulent Practice has, of late Years, increased with the great Demand for Wool ; for as the *Manufacturer* is obliged to buy, that his Looms may not stand still, even when his Gains from the Vent abroad are not great, the *Grower*, knowing his Necessity, will not suffer him to open and inspect the Fleeces, on a Pretence of its being prejudicial to the Wool ; but, indeed, was that Liberty permitted, it would be impossible for the Manufacturer to employ so much time as a strict Examination into the several Parcels or Bags he may want would require, in order to find out these Abuses, to which he must be always liable because he cannot discover them before he has agreed, and perhaps paid for his Wool ; and afterwards he can get no Allowance, nor any Redress without the Expence of a Law-suit, which may prove a Remedy worse than the Disease.

The ill Consequences to the NATION from this fraudulent Manner of *Winding* are very obvious. If the bad Wool is work'd up with the Good, it spoils the Piece: It must therefore be laid by as useless to be sold at a great

* A Tod of Wool, consisting of four Fleeces only, is reckoned to be more valuable by 2 s. 6 d. than a Tod consisting of five Fleeces, and so in Proportion.

Loss, and the damaged Wool and Rubbish is flung away as good for nothing; and in this Case too, as in that of the *Pitch* and *Tar-Mark*, the Manufacturer is not the principal Sufferer, but the greatest Injury and Prejudice falls upon the NATIONAL TRADE; for the Manufacturer, to indemnify himself for having bought *bad* Materials at the same Price as if they were *good*, will, either not make his Goods so perfect, which will be a Discredit upon them at Market; or, if they are perfectly well made, must ask such a Price for them as may make him run the hazard of being underfold in the same Sort of Goods by his Neighbours.

This Abuse practised by the *Growers* of Wool is not new, but has been a Fraud which was many Years since complained of; and Endeavours were used to prevent it by the Legislature at different Periods of Time, under Circumstances very remarkable, and material to the Subject I am now considering.—In 1531, which was the 23d Year of the Reign of *Hen. VIII.* so little Progress had our Ancestors made in Trade and Manufactures, that they look'd upon it as a valuable Traffic to sell their raw Wool to Foreigners, who bought it here to send to the Manufacturers abroad.

But

But low Cunning taught the Growers of Wool, at that Time, to cheat by winding up in the Fleece Clay, Lead, Stones, Sand, Tails, false Locks, Cots, Cals, Comber, Lambs-Wool, &c. and thereby adding to the Weight of the Fleece, which they sold, and were paid for as genuine pure Wool; an Artifice not unlike those which Lord *Anson* observes to be practised upon Strangers by the lowest Sort of *Chinese* at *Canton*.

The Buyers complain'd of this Deceit, and the Government thought it worth their Attention, *professedly*, upon the Complaint, and for the Sake of the Buyer, but *really* for the Sake of the Seller.

The Growers were all Natives the Buyers were Foreigners: If the Traffic and Cheat could both have subsisted, it was so much clear Gain from abroad.

But the Government saw that not only the Honour, but Interest of the Nation required a Stop to be put to such foul Dealing: For as the Selling Raw-Wool was deem'd an Object of Profit, before the superior Policy of working it up at Home was learnt; the Government saw that the Buyers would look out for Wool elsewhere, if they could not buy
I with

with Security in *England*. And therefore a temporary * Act of Parliament was made, prohibiting the Deceits and Mixtures complain'd of in winding up the Fleece, under the Penalty of Six-pence for every Offence; which, considering the Value of Money at that Time, and the low Price of Wool, was, together with the Costs of Suit, thought sufficient to prevent such an abominable Abuse.

During the rest of that bold Reign, they had not Leisure to think of Commerce, and therefore from Inattention suffered this Law to expire.

The Minority that follow'd was engaged in other Cares.

The Councils of *Queen Mary* were too intent upon rescuing *Souls from Heresy*, to think of temporal Concerns.

The Reign of *Queen Elizabeth* was an Age of Great Men in this Country; and she had the Sense and good Fortune to chuse some of the ablest for her Ministers. They soon discover'd that the only Sources from whence *England* could draw Wealth, Power, and Grandeur, were Trade and Manufactures:

* 23 Hen. VIII. Cap. 17.

They open'd those Sources, and tried many Ways to teach this Secret to the People.

In 1568 and 1569, the Duke *D'Alva's* Violence drove, among others, many Woollen Manufacturers out of the Low-Countries. Queen *Elizabeth*, and her Cabinet, heartily glad of the Occasion, received the Refugees with open Arms; made Accommodations for them at *Norwich, Colchester, Maidstone, Sandwich, and Southampton*; and set them at Work. This occasioned a brisk Demand for Wool: The Demand encouraged the short-sighted Seller of Wool to renew the old Tricks in winding up the Fleece: That wise Government instantly interpos'd, without waiting for a Complaint in Form; and in * 1571 reviv'd the beforemention'd Act, and at once made it perpetual; reciting, that by Proof and Experience it had been found beneficial and profitable to the Common-Wealth.

The Journals of the House of Commons, during this Time are extant. There was not one Petition by Growers of any Denomination against it. There was no Difference of Opinion in the House upon the Expedience and Necessity of the Measure. All Men agreed to call a CHEAT by its *Name*, and then there could be no Question whether it should be practis'd with Impunity.

* 13 *Eliz.* Cap. 25.

The same Genius that contriv'd the Tricks heretofore, which this Statute meant to prevent, has of late Years invented new Frauds, by winding up great Quantities of Pitch and Tar, under Pretence of its being the necessary Mark, and so adding a little Weight; and by mixing bad coarse Wool, under Pretence of winding many Fleeces together.

The Manufacturers, finding themselves impos'd upon and deceiv'd by this base and increasing Practice, were under a Necessity of applying to Parliament for some Provision against this Grievance; and what they desire is only, that each Fleece may be *wound single*; that is, that no more than what grows upon one Sheep's Back should be folded together at once, with an Increase of Penalty for such as shall be fraudulently wound and exposed to Sale, in Proportion to the increased Value of Wool beyond what it was when the former Laws were made; that such Penalty may be adequate to the Crime, and put an End to so crying a Cheat. No-body, surely, of common Equity and Candour, can fairly object to this Proposition, if he will allow that the Subjects of this Kingdom, who now work up our Wool into Manufactures, and bring so much more *Wealth* into the NATION by the Sale of them abroad, have the same Right to the Protection and Benefit of the Laws, and ought to have the same Encouragement as Foreigners

had in the Purchase of our Wool, in order to manufacture it for their own Advantage: Therefore, it is to be hoped, that a Penalty will be granted to prevent these Frauds, equal to what the Buyers of our Wool formerly obtained, and that the same will be made effectual by some easy Means of Recovery, which might in a Bill be settled on so fair and impartial a Foot as to remedy the Evil, without the least Inconvenience or Prejudice to the fair Grower and Seller of Wool.

The great Benefits, therefore, that will accrue to the KINGDOM by saving so considerable a Quantity of Wool, and by wresting our Manufacturers from those Injuries, which, if not remedied, may destroy their Reputation, check our FOREIGN TRADE, and consequently the Employment of our Wool (for the Interests of the Grower, Manufacturer, and our Foreign Trade are inseparable) are such cogent Arguments, as, when consider'd together, will, I flatter myself, convince those who appeared against the Regulations proposed, that their Opposition was founded upon mistaken Principles, which proceed from narrow and selfish Notions that obstruct their having a due Attention, even to their own Interest, and seeing it thro' a proper and true Medium.

Before

Before the Exportation of raw Wool was absolutely prohibited, the narrow-minded Grower might, though very falsely, think his Interest different from that of the *English* Manufacturer. The Interest of the one, was, to have Wool cheap; the other might wish to sell it dear; and, with that View, send it to the highest Market abroad, if our own Manufacturer could not afford the Price.

But now the narrow immediate Interest of the Grower depends upon the *English* Manufacturer intirely: For he can't export what Wool is not manufactured here; because, that is by Law now prohibited under very severe Penalties. If then the *English* Manufacture should lose its Credit and Vent abroad, to such a Degree as to oblige the Manufacturer to make fewer Woollen Goods, consequently to use less Wool, suppose 1000 or 10000 Packs, that 1000 or 10000 Packs must lie upon the Hands of the Grower, and rot; for he can't send it to that Country which may get the Manufacture from us; and therefore, unless the Grower sells upon such Terms as enable the Manufacture to go cheap abroad, he must bring his own Wool at last to bear no Price at all.—But if their Interests clash'd, the Interest of the NATION is to be prefer'd to both.

The

The Case I take to be this: The Farmers have, of late Years, from the great Vent of our Manufactures abroad, enjoyed the Benefit of a lively Demand for their Wool at a great Price; they have largely increased their Fortunes by it, and without being at all envied by the Manufacturers, who have found the Advantage of the same favourable Circumstances: But the Farmers make themselves believe, that this Flow of Trade and Riches must always continue; and not content with the Profit naturally arising from an extraordinary Demand of their Wool, occasioned by an extraordinary Vent of our Manufactures abroad, which may be in a great Measure owing to Circumstances of a contingent Nature, they endeavour to increase their Gain by increasing the Weight of the Fleeces with accumulating the *Tar-Mark*, and fraudulently *Winding* of them; imagining, I suppose, that the Manufacturer being under a Necessity to buy, must give them their Price, and even pay for *bad* Wool at the same Rate with that which is *good*; and blinded with the present, and in part ill-gotten Profit, they can't help thinking it will last for ever. But let them only look back and reflect on the Deadness of Trade, which some Years since was known to be our unkind Situation, when the Wool, though not I suppose above $\frac{3}{4}$ of the present Growth, could not all be consumed, and what was sold was on very low Terms,

4

full

full 30 *per Cent.* under the present Prices : Let them but consider that the Causes of our having had lately so flourishing a Trade for our Woollen Goods abroad were accidental, and are in a great Measure ceased ; that now in Time of Peace, almost all the States of *Europe*, and *Spain* in particular (which has hitherto been one of the best Markets for our Woollen Goods) sensible at last of the Advantages that arise from Manufactures, are employing their Thoughts and turning the Industry of their People that way ; that we have more Rivals in that Trade than ever ; that the Foreign Markets are over-stock'd with a Glutt of Woollen Goods ; that the Merchants find the greatest Vent and quickest Returns for their Commodities, according to the Goodness and Cheapness of them ; that a small Difference in the Price of those of the same Sort may turn the Scale against us ; and that the Gain made by the *Grower* from selling Pitch and Tar, damaged Wool, Rubbish, &c. for good Wool, may make that Difference in the Price, and our Merchants may be under-fold by our Neighbours abroad, because our Goods of the same Sort are either not made so perfect, or, if perfect, cannot be afforded so cheap.

This must ultimately affect the Value of Wool, and may reduce it by a *slow* but *certain* Failure
of

of our *Foreign Trade*, to that low languishing Condition it once laboured under.

To these unpleasant Reflections, may be added the many Advantages, such as frugal Living, Cheapness of Labour, Order, and Police, which some Foreign Nations have over us, to inforce the Motives for abolishing Frauds and Abuses so detrimental to the Manufacturers, the Merchants, the Commerce, the Farmer himself, and consequently *to the Strength and Riches of the NATION*, as has been made to appear by undeniable Facts and Reasons, agreeable to the Principles laid down in the beginning of this Discourse.

And now, perhaps, some of the Growers of Wool, not pleased with the second Proposition, *viz.* “ That the cheaper the Material is, the cheaper the Manufacture may be made,” may cry out against it, and say, that it is very reasonable, and their Business to get as good a Price as they can for their Wool. They are certainly in the Right, and no-body can blame them for it; and, indeed, it can be of no ill Consequence, as long as it can be done in an honest and fair Way of Trade; for the Price of Wool will always be higher or lower, according to the Demand, which will ever regulate the Value of Goods: But if, blinded by the Prospect of an immediate and greater Gain, they cannot,

cannot, or will not see the ill Consequences of it, and will by accumulating the Tar-Mark, and by a fraudulent winding of the Fleeces, increase the Weight of them, and sell this increased Weight for good and real Wool, they may deceive the Manufacturer, but this Deceit, as has been already shewn, must affect the Credit or Value of his Goods abroad with respect to the Goodness or Price of them, and the evil Day of losing one of the *most valuable Branches of our Foreign Commerce*, (whilst other Nations, our Rivals in Trade, act upon honest Principles, and find the Benefit of it) will be unexpectedly brought upon us; the Growers of Wool will, when it is too late, repent of their ill-timed Selfishness and Policy by the irretrievable Mischief and Loss that will fall upon the Estates that grow Wool, which will always be more or less valuable in proportion to the Vent of our Produce and Labour in Foreign Countries; for, I believe, there is no Proposition in *Euclid* truer than that the Interests of the Growers and Manufacturers of Wool are as inseparable as the Landed and Commercial Interests are, whose flourishing or low Condition are naturally connected together, and depend upon one another; and accordingly this Country will be Rich or Poor, Strong or Weak, respected or despised.

If the Country Gentlemen and Farmers would give themselves time to consider their own Interest in this extensive and National View in which they are all concerned as Individuals; and instead of being pleased with the present Advantages of getting, by undue Practices, more for their Wool than it is really worth, and than the Manufacturer can afford to give, consistent with his Foreign Trade, would be contented to sell their Wool *Clean and Good*, according to the Market Price, they would, by finding the Demand more lasting, find it more advantageous to them in the End; and, therefore, upon this honest and beneficial Principle, there can be no rational Objection against *clipping off the Pitch and Tar-Mark, before the Sheep is shorn, and agreeing that each Fleece shall be wound single*; which is all the Manufacturer desires, that he may only pay for what he intends to buy, and what should be intended to be sold him, *REAL Wool*; which will then, according to the Quality of it, and Demand for it, bear its true and natural Value in a fair Way of Trade between Man and Man.

This is the CRITICAL JUNCTURE: Our Woollen Trade is in a ticklish Situation, perhaps *upon the Balance* of being *preserved or lost*: The great Question is, Shall we *remove or suffer* Frauds and Abuses to go on in the
Sale

Sale of Wool? Upon the Determination of this Question depends, I verily believe, the Fate of this *valuable Branch* of our FOREIGN COMMERCE, which will accordingly continue to *flourish*, or gradually *fall* into *Decay*; the fatal Consequences of which last, to GREAT BRITAIN, are too obvious to want any farther Explanation.

F I N I S.



133
The of which Upon the Determination of this
Question depends, I really believe, the Fate
of this valuable Branch of our Foreign
Commerce, which will accordingly soon
be to flow, or gradually run into Decay;
the fatal Consequences of which I do not
believe, are too obvious to want any
further Explanation.

F I N I S

